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SB65-19/20: Resolution Supporting Wage Increases for Teacher Assistanships and Base Stipend Research Assistanships

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana
Resolution Supporting Wage Increases for Teacher Assistantships and Base
Stipend Research Assistantships
March 12th, 2020
SB65-19/20

~~Authored by: Cierra Anderson, ASUM Senator; Jordan Jimmie, ASUM Senator;~~

Whereas, The Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) is the official student government for the University of Montana;

Whereas, One of ASUM's purposes on campus is to advocate for student needs and interests;

Whereas, The University of Montana has 2,761 graduate and professional students enrolled according to the Spring 2020 Census Data¹;

Whereas, Over 530 of those students are employed through a research or teaching contract with the University²;

Whereas, Graduate teaching assistants in Montana reportedly make the least amount of money across the country at an annual mean wage of \$18,850 a year³ while the national mean wage is \$36,340⁴;

~~Whereas, The base salaries for teacher and researcher assistantships at the University hasn't~~
changed since the mid-1990's;

Whereas, Many graduate students cannot afford to pay their bills due to the low pay, lack of healthcare coverage and rising cost of living in cities like Missoula⁵;

Whereas, Making the choice to admit additional graduate students without proper compensation or benefits is negligent on the part of the University;

Whereas, The University's mission is to provide "high-quality and accessible education" and the mission of the Graduate School is to "cultivate the talent and ability of a new generation of scholars and professionals...";

Whereas, The wages and benefits offered to graduate students do not reflect an accessible education because graduate students are in financially precarious situations which also impacts their ability to provide "high-quality" teaching and/or research;

~~Whereas, An increase in the base salary for teaching and research assistantships of at least \$3000~~
~~and/or providing system-wide full coverage health insurance and/or benefits would allow the~~
graduate students to lower their financial stress and allow the University to compete nationally for students;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, That ASUM support the increase of teacher and research assistantship base salaries by at least \$3000;

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48 Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That ASUM support system-wide full coverage health
49 insurance and/or benefits for graduate student teacher and research assistantships;
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51 Therefore, Let It Be Further Resolved, That this resolution be sent to: Seth Bodnar, President;
52 ~~Jon Harbor, Provost and Executive Vice-President; Scott Whittenberg, Dean of the Graduate~~
53 School; Ashby Kinch, Associate Dean of the Graduate School; Dr. Mark Pershouse, Chair of
54 Faculty Senate; Dr. Chris Palmer, Chair-Elect of Faculty Senate; Dr. Cara Nelson, Chair of
55 Graduate Council; Dr. Sara Rinfret, Co-Chair of Graduate Council.
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58 Passed by Committee: _____, 2020
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60 Passed by ASUM Senate: March 25, 2020
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65 Noah Durnell, Ethan Hanley,
66 Chair of the Relations and Affairs Committee Chair of the Senate
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70 Cierra Anderson,
71 Co-Chair of the Graduate and Professional Student Committee
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74 _____
75 Hallee Kansman,
76 Co-Chair of the Graduate and Professional Student Committee
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78 Resolution unanimously approved